

Calvin & Hobbes and the Gargantuan Thingamabob

by Me

Category: Calvin & Hobbes

Genre: Humor

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 1999-12-04 09:00:00

Updated: 1999-12-04 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 10:29:20

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 3,676

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: C & H pose as inventors on the 'Net. Calvin's dad's firm wants to help them get patents.

Calvin & Hobbes and the Gargantuan Thingamabob

The Gargantuan Thingamabob

The characters of Calvin, Hobbes, and other comic strip creations of Bill Watterson are Mr. Watterson's and his alone. Original characters are mine, but if he ever wants he can borrow mine just like I'm borrowing his. I'll return his when I'm done :-)

Calvin and Hobbes saddled up to the computer. "Isn't it amazing what you can find on the Net?" inquired the six-year-old boy with mussed up hair.

"It sure is," spoke Hobbes, his trusty tiger companion.

After struggling for a while, the boy finally figured out how to skirt the Parental Controls on his screen name, Tiger. He chose to make a new name and also created one for Hobbes. After quite a bit of typing, he inquired "what do you want to be called?"

"Hobbes," came the animal matter-of-factly.

"No, I mean your screen name - I'm setting one up for you."

"Why can't I just be Hobbes!?" complained the tiger.

Calvin couldn't believe his tiger's simplicity at times. "Because that's too easy, you need something mysterious." Calvin typed a few things. "I'm changing mine to Jungleman. I live in the jungle."

"You have to do something other than just live in the jungle!"

"Says who," hollered Calvin.

Hobbes got in his face. "Says me! How could you afford a computer if you just lived in the jungle?"

Calvin sighed. "Oh, all right, let's say I'm an inventor...hey, that'd be neat, then I could tell people about all these great things I made!" He snickered. "And everyone will want to send me money."

The tiger furrowed his brow. "Isn't that illegal?"

"Hey, I won't actually tell em they have to, or even give an address. Just having people guess what I'm up to, and how it'll change the world, is good enough." He paused to think. "Detroit's baseball team is the Tigers. What's in Detroit?"

"They make cars," noted the tiger.

"That's good, you're Automan," remarked Calvin as he typed in the new screen name. His tiger considered demanding a different name, but as he thought about it, it sounded rather cool.

Calvin's dad was going through some technical drawings a client had left, when his boss entered. He asked, "you been on the Internet lately?"

"Not since last Friday," spoke Calvin's dad.

"Well, a couple of our interns and I have been following what this guy's been posting on some of the legal bulletin boards," explained the senior attorney. "Seems he's done quite a bit of work - and yet he says he lives out in the jungle!"

That's where I'd like to go to get away from Calvin some days, considered the man. "And so I suppose he somehow contacted our firm; this sounds like a hoax." Though it's fun to imagine sometimes. That was one thing he shared with his son - an imagination. He just wished Calvin could control his!

"That's just it, he hasn't." The boss, junior partner Alex Cochrane, asked him to connect to the Internet. After he directed him to the right page, he pointed to Jungleman's first post. "It's dated Saturday, he talks about having synthesized a rare plant that oozes something which will take stains off of anything." He spoke somewhat skeptically, but realized that just because one didn't know how to spell something didn't mean he wasn't a good inventor; for all he knew English might not be the man's language. It had happened before when he'd spoken to German or Japanese clients.

The dad thought the same thing, but still remained hesitant. "We've heard that before. And why no links?"

"He says he'll have a website developed by this weekend, he just now got a computer." Cochrane thought a moment. "I don't know which jungle he's in, but if it's Brazil maybe my son's friends have heard of him. They're missionaries down there."

Calvin's dad read several more posts, and some responses. "Most are

doubting it, and I'll admit it's pretty far out. Wait..." He began reading. "Here's one by someone named Automan,' sounds like he's pretty smart, and he's tried it out." He hummed. "And he's here in the U.S. Says English isn't his first language, either."

"I know it could be phony. But read yesterday's post titled The Gargantuan Thingamabob.'" The underling whistled. "That's what the website will talk about. It's a worldwide unveiling. Here's what I want from you. I want you to work with our interns, e-mail these fellows and try to figure out what's going on. See if they're legit. Let them know who we are, and we could help them get the patent rights! It'll be a big step for our firm."

Calvin and Hobbes worked on the Internet their allotted hour a day each day that week, congratulating each other on their mastery of these people. Sure, the others on the Net were skeptical, but a small portion were buying their fables. After all, the first grader did write like someone for who English was only a recent addition to their repertoire.

. Calvin's mom popped her head into the computer room from time to time, glad to see Calvin having fun and not watching TV. True, he wasn't outside, but at least he was quiet, and she could tell he wasn't getting into anything not meant for children. With that boy, this was as good as she could hope.

After his mom left the room one day, Calvin and Hobbes began drawing. "What should this thing do?"

Calvin thought a moment, his mind drifting toward Spaceman Spiff's adventures. "I always thought interstellar travel would be fun."

"Yeah," Hobbes noted, "but so far we've been able to fool em by just throwing words out from the dictionary as we looked them up, so it seemed like we were trying to learn English as we typed. We don't know how interstellar travel would work, though."

Calvin shook his head in exasperation. "Don't you know anything. That's why we use it - they don't, either!"

"That's true." Hobbes scratched his head. "Why do I have a feeling this could get out of hand?"

"Because you don't dare to dream." Calvin held out his hands. "You tigers are already so perfect, you don't think of having to improve." He turned back to drawing. "One of these days people will pass you up if you don't watch it."

Hobbes watched as Calvin drew very non-aerodynamic wings on the machine. He finally dragged the mouse until it fell off the table. "Oh, I don't think we'll have to worry about that for a long time." He thought a moment. "Say, why not get onto a Star Trek newsgroup. We could mix around some technobabble from there."

"I want this to be MY creation!" Calvin paused. "I'm going to the thesaurus for the name. Though I suppose a little Star Trek wouldn't hurt."

Alex Cochrane was grinning at his desk when Calvin's dad reported to

work Monday. "Guess what, the Gargantuan Thingamabob is on-line!" He invited the man to take a look at his computer screen. "Isn't it fascinating? It creates a subspace field to travel, instant wormholes', as Jungleman describes it. The inner workings - imagine the computer size. And yet, we know they can make huge supercomputers."

"It has a portal that can turn anything into anything else..." muttered the lawyer. "And can go faster than light? Impossible!"

"Not according to Automan. Turns out he's got several Ph.D.s from a very prestigious Japanese university; he writes he came over to the U.S. because he liked our food better, and the pay was higher." Looking a little queasy, the partner agreed that "he's right about the food."

"Can we verify?" If someone had a faster than light plane, how could one tell? Of course, it made sense one would keep it secret until now, as Jungleman said - he didn't want anyone stealing their ideas. But, still...

"That's what I want you to do. Detroit's not that far from here, drive up there tomorrow night, plan to meet with him on Wednesday, if you can arrange it with him. I know it sounds strange, but just check it out, and use that imagination you say your son has."

"He's got enough for not only both of us, but our whole firm," lamented the man.

The boss smiled. "Well, that's just what the Wright Brother used. Of course, we need to talk with him, get some technical drawings, and the like but one never knows. Like he says, who would have thought so many of the things we have now could be done. The very year that the Wright Brothers flew, there were lots of people saying it could never happen."

"Hobbes," exclaimed Calvin as they got onto the Internet that afternoon, "you got another e-mail from that attorney."

"Great." Hobbes sat at the computer chair and began typing a reply. "He asked something about where my University is, what papers I've published. I'm going to make up some names."

"Good! Make it a really great one, make yourself the best."

"What if they try to trace it," came the very practical tiger.

"Hmmm, good point." The boy rubbed his chin, then recalled that "Japan has a lot of earthquakes, say they were destroyed in one of those." Hobbes grinned and typed, glad his practicality blended so well with Calvin's imagination. "Remember, Hobbes, he's a lawyer, you need to sound as good as you can."

"You mean better than we tigers already are?" An e-mail was sent discussing a large, prestigious college which was beset by problems relating to the early hitting of the Y2K bug - which was now fixed but which erased all student records - as well as an earthquake. "I'm covering our tracks even more."

"Yeah, you tigers are smart about that; just like in the jungle." Calvin began reading the reply after several minutes. "Uh-oh," came the sudden remark.

"What's wrong?"

"He wants to come up and visit you in Detroit," the boy explained.

The tiger shook his head, adamantly declaring "I'm not going to Detroit! You go!"

Calvin put his hands on his hips. "How am I going to get to Detroit?"

"Well, how am I going to explain to them I'm a tiger," the animal inquired testily.

Calvin grouched for a couple minutes, then hit upon an idea. "I know. Let's tell him you have to go back to Japan for a funeral." Hobbes began typing, liking the idea. "But so we won't disappoint him, we'll fax him some stuff."

"We don't have a fax machine," proclaimed Hobbes. I knew we'd have problems somewhere.

"That's the beauty of technology, Hobbes my friend. This modem's a fax modem. We'll make some more drawings, and fax them to the attorneys." He doodled a little, then cut and pasted several items onto his document. "These will be the drawings for the small technical stuff. And you'll write in some technical data."

The tiger was dumbfounded but intrigued. "How do I do that?"

"Make up some of those equations like big kids have in their math books. Say one letter equals...let's say the speed of light, another equals some other number..."

"Hobbes' constant?"

"Yeah, whatever. I can't believe we got this firm hooked!" He rubbed his hands together. "Pretty soon reporters will be hailing Jungleman as the next Thomas Einstein."

"Do you mean Thomas Edison or Albert Einstein?" Calvin shrugged as he and Hobbes completed the drawings and faxed them to the lawyers, with Hobbes' regrets that he needed to return to Japan for the funeral of his grandfather.

Calvin's dad arrived home wearily, pondering the invention which only recently had been known as the "Gargantuan Thingamabob" but which since its unveiling had become known as "the Flying Machine." Already, others were starting to talk positively about it. Though always a family man, he sometimes dreaded coming home to the extra-ornery six-year-old of theirs. He briefly considered what life would be like holding press conferences if this got really big, becoming Jungleman's spokesman.

"Hello, Dear," he and his wife said as they exchange kisses. The man

inquired as to Calvin's whereabouts.

"Oh, he's just finished up on the computer," she said as she took his coat. "It's so good to see him not watching those trashy talk shows or something else on TV."

"Yeah, good." Calvin ran up to his dad, and they embraced. "Good evening son. Say, guess what?"

"We're going on vacation to Mars?"

The man chuckled. "No, not exactly. But there's some really neat stuff that our patent office got about spaceships." He still wasn't sure if he believed it, especially with all the weird theorems and figures which were faxed to him, but he knew Calvin would enjoy looking at it. If it was true, he and his son would both have a great time with it. If it were phony, he could teach his son something about not always being able to believe everything one saw. "This one fellow's got all sorts of Star Trek style drawings and things that he sent me."

Calvin suddenly got a lump in his throat. Oh, no, I've been sending those to my dad?! How could I be so dumb, I should have checked the firm name! "Really," managed to come out of his throat.

I thought he'd be more enthused, considered his dad as he pulled out the paper Calvin had just faxed to his office. "Now, I don't know if it'll fly, and I need to be on the phone to talk with a few mathematicians tonight, because I've never heard of some of these theorems. But, it could work."

The boy decided the best route was to show disdain for the design. "Are you kidding, why I thought you'd bring something sleek like the Enterprise home, that thing will never fly!"

Having a vivid imagination too, his dad explained. "I like to think that we're on the cutting edge of science. If it doesn't it doesn't, but that doesn't mean we can't at least submit it to the patent office." He grinned. "It does look silly, though, huh? That's what I thought when I first read it." And here starts my teaching him about hoaxes, Calvin's dad told himself.

The boy agreed, and ran out to the table. "It's so nice to see you getting him involved in your work, dear," Calvin's mom declared.

"We've tried so hard to get Calvin interested in something besides dinosaurs, if one thing like this piques his interest, who knows. If this doesn't work, when he grows up maybe he'll be designing something just like this that does."

That night, Hobbes looked up from a book as Calvin prepared for bed. He inquired "how's our gargantuan thingamabob doing?"

"Great, there've been hundreds of hits on the website, and a couple news programs have at least had some curiosity. We could be famous, except for one thing. My dad's the one looking into it, and he almost was scheduled to meet you in Detroit!"

Puzzled, Hobbes replied "but he already knows me."

Calvin gritted his teeth. "Why, of all the attorneys, does he have to be the one?"

"Maybe he has the imagination others don't," considered the tiger.

"I never thought of Dad as having an imagination." Hobbes looked up. "Anyway, Hobbes, what are we going to do now? If you ever come back from your funeral in Japan, he'll get sent up there."

"My funeral?! It's not mine, it's my..." Calvin and Hobbes froze. "Wait a minute, that's it."

"Yeah, buddy, of course, we could kill Automan off!" Calvin held a finger to his chin. "Though I'd hate losing those cool drawings you did."

"I could leave a will where I give all my stuff to the firm," suggested the tiger.

Calvin clapped his hands. "Yeah, then if it ever did work, it would still be ours, in a way. Great thinking." He mused aloud "how should we kill Automan?"

"I could die heroically, like those guys in the movies when they try to rescue people with Apache helicopters."

"But they never die," complained Calvin. After several moments, Calvin's mom came up to say goodnight, and asked him why he wasn't in bed. "I was just wondering - what's a good heroic way to kill off a fictional character?"

"Oh, are you writing another story?"

"Sort of."

She tucked him and Hobbes into bed. "You know, I think your story of the Three Calvins was fabulous on its own, and so does Miss Wormwood. You can come up with something, I'm sure."

Calvin stared ahead. "I never killed anyone off, though."

His mom felt glad that was a problem, for it showed her son had compassion beneath that unruly exterior. As she explained, "it's good you don't know how. Death is very final, and very tragic, like with that animal you found at the side of the road. It hurts a lot of people when someone dies. Maybe you can write it so there's a chance he's not dead," she suggested as she kissed him goodnight. Suddenly, Calvin had a great idea.

That Friday, Mr. Cochrane ambled slowly to Calvin's dad's desk. "Bad news, Sir," asked the young attorney.

"Maybe. We got this anonymous fax last night, after we'd closed. It was around seven, so we're guessing it was early morning Japan time." He handed it to him.

Calvin's dad read quite silently for several moments, then raised his eyebrows and said "flew into a volcano?!?"

"Apparently he did some flying himself with experimental planes, and someone else was trapped in there." Cochrane lowered his head. "The person he rescued made it out. There's a chance the one we call Automan survived, but it's very slim. And if they ever did find him, he's badly hurt, anyway."

The man was disappointed. He'd grown fond of the odd science espoused by Automan and Jungleman. "And the inventor, the one in the jungle - any hope we can reach him?"

"Fraid not. His friend Monday sent us an e-mail Wednesday that we got Thursday, he'd been eaten by a tiger."

That evening, Calvin and Hobbes were working on the computer. "Brilliant, Hobbes, having Jungleman' eaten by a tiger."

"As smart as humans are," noted the animal, "they're no match for the ferocious members of the animal kingdom."

"You said it. Hey, Dad's home!" Hobbes stayed by the computer as Calvin ran to greet him. Father and son embraced, and the dad remarked that he had some bad news. He chose to tell Calvin only about the heroic death of Automan; no sense telling about the more gruesome one. He was only six, and gross enough as it was sometimes without hearing about Juingleman.

"You're taking it better than I expected, I must admit," remarked the dad.

Calvin shrugged. "I guess I figure there's always hope; sounds like one of those action movies, and you know they always survive there." His dad nodded and grinned. Life's not usually like that, but maybe, he told him, maybe. "What's that stuff bulging out of your briefcase?"

"Calvin, my boss and I agree that there's just one thing to do with these papers." He pulled out all the drawings and faxes, as well as copies of what had been on Calvin's website.

The boy was confused as Hobbes walked into the room. "What could that be?" He once again began to fear his dad knew all along. But then why was he grinning.

"We think you should have them." He handed the stack to his startled son. "You have a great imagination. And one day, if you behave and listen in school, and get really good grades and learn all your subjects so you can tinker with the ideas, who knows. Your name could be in the history books along with the Wright Brothers'." Maybe this will get him to behave better, pondered the man. Something has to work.

Cool," Calvin managed to say as he and Hobbes ran upstairs and put them in a box under his bed. Once in his room, the boy proclaimed "we got our stuff back!"

"I'm at a loss to understand how," remarked the animal with furrowed brow.

"How' doesn't matter, Hobbes! What's important is we've got

something top secret here, that we created, and that is out there for everyone to see!" He rubbed his hands together. "We can't tell anyone it was ours to begin with. But now, we've got free reign to work with it in the open!"

The tiger analyzed the drawings. "Now I'm really confused. That's so mysterious...but it's fun. Almost like our own personal X' files."

"Precisely. And who know, maybe Dad's right, I could invent..." He hesitated. "Whoa, that's scary!"

"What, that we might be flying faster than light someday?"

Calvin shook his head. "No! I just admitted Dad might be right about something. What is this world coming to?"

End
file.